

Jeremiah 18:1-12 (ESV)

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² “Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” ³ So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴ And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶ “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷ If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸ and if that nation concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. ⁹ And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, ¹⁰ and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. ¹¹ Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ‘Thus says the LORD, Behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds.’

¹² But they say, ‘That is in vain! We will follow our own plans, and will every one act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.’”

Introduction

“The doctrine of original sin is the only empirically verifiable doctrine of the Christian faith.”¹ We live in a sinful world. Even to the skeptic or to the atheist this troubling truth is nevertheless true: we live in a sinful world. We recognize there is evil all around us: corruption in government; conspiracies among those seeking power; even the horrors that have shaken my church with the revelation over the summer that our former long-serving pastor—my pastor from birth to the age of 14—early in his pastoral ministry sexually assaulted little girls, the friends of his daughters, murdered one of them, and covered it up for half a century, confessing only after being pushed into a corner by a relentless public servant. It’s easy for us to recognize there is evil in this world ‘out there,’ almost as if ‘out there’ was this abstract idea we can affirm to cast blame and move on from. It’s harder, though, when evil pops up close to home.

¹ Reinhold Niebuhr

But if we honestly think about the fact that evil exists in the world, that also should lead us to come to terms with the reality of our own evil. *We cannot acknowledge the evil in this world without also recognizing our own contribution to it.* This is where the Christian doctrine of sin loses people. We like to think of our sins and the sins of those around us and the sins of the world in relative terms; I’m not *as bad as* this guy from work. We pretty up our sins with different terminology as well: rather than committing adultery, we have affairs, open marriages, or the ever-so-dehumanizing term ‘side chick’; rather than fornicating, we fool around; rather than lying, we are loose with the truth; rather than unleashing uncontrolled anger, we call it being a man; rather than being an alcoholic, we have a drinking problem; rather than gossiping, we participate in prayer chains; rather than enabling human-sex trafficking, we call it watching pornography.

We do this, we pretty up our sins with less severe language and then we judge our own seemingly minor sinfulness *relative* to the immense sinfulness of others because at our core as humans, we do not like to accept responsibility for our mistakes and we much prefer to shift the blame for our problems onto others. This has been true of humanity since the beginning. Adam and Eve when confronted by God immediately shifted blame. The woman you gave me made me do it; the devil made me do it—and we’ve been blaming others ever since. This is why Jesus warns against judging others by telling us to take the log out of our own eye before pointing out the speck in the eyes of others. *We cannot acknowledge the evil in this world without also recognizing our own contribution to it.*

There are times when it is appropriate to blame someone else. My church community has been shaken by the disturbing double-life of our former pastor. He committed that act, not us; he is to blame for his own sins. He’s an easy scapegoat at the moment to talk about sin; he should have done this; he should have done that; if I were in his shoes, I would have... as if it’s never us committing the sin.² We talk often about what God has done with our sin. Today, though, I want to consider a different question: what is the Christian to do with his or her own sin? I want to talk to you about what *we* should do with *our own* sin. *We cannot acknowledge the evil in this world without also recognizing our own contribution to it.* What must you do with your sin?

² One of the mantras I live by is that *everything is theological*. How do we grapple with the fallout of this man’s evil? Everything is theological. How we respond to any significant situation, such as this one, is a reflection of our theological convictions. Though there may be a disconnect between the affirmation of our mind and the feelings of our heart, we must at least try to start with those steady theological convictions to avoid imbalanced emotionalism, and if it takes time for our hearts to catch up to our minds that is totally reasonable, but we still must start somewhere and I think the safest starting point is not our impassioned hearts but rather our convictions from God’s Word.

Case Study: The Ninevites Who Heard Jonah Preach

Turn in your bibles to the book of Jonah. A question has been raised throughout the ages, often in light of the story we read in Jonah. The question raised through the ages is this: Does repentance change God’s mind? God commands the reluctant prophet to go to the heathen Ninevites and call out against them for their evil (1:2). As the story goes, Jonah did not want to do that and went on a ship in the other direction. The ship was pursued by God’s wrathful weather and his fellow mariners tossed him overboard, upon which the sea ceased its raging and those non-Israelite mariners immediately worshiped YHWH. Meanwhile, a big fish swallows Jonah, he prays for repentance, and on the third day the fish vomited Jonah. Like the Israelites, Jonah was led by God through the chaos waters onto dry land, and this resurrection from the depths of Sheol is Jonah’s salvation. God then called Jonah, yet again, to call out the evil of the Ninevites:

Beginning in Jon. 3:2 — “‘Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.’ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of YHWH... Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’ And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, ‘By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.’ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to YHWH and said” I knew you would do this (3:2-4:1).

I want to highlight a few things about the Ninevites.³ O city of Nineveh, you shall be overthrown in forty days! A prophet of YHWH went to a foreign land—hostile territory—to call them out for all the sin, wickedness, abominations, and evil found therein. Jonah’s first audience *responded by simply believing God*. They did not scoff at the message like those in the days of

³ For comparison, the most recent census put the population of our own city of Fairfield at 119,705. The final verse of Jonah tells us there were about 120,000 people in the city of Nineveh, essentially equivalent with our own city.

Noah. They believed the message: Nineveh would be overthrown in forty days. They believed the message because they were called out for their sin and they could not deny it. They were convicted of their sin and believed that wrath was not only imminent but deserved.

Flowing from their belief in the message, Jon. 3:5 tells us the prophet’s first audience called for a fast and put on sackcloth. These actions in Scripture are characteristic of immense mourning. But then the message reached the ears of the king of Nineveh and he stripped his clothes to cover himself in sackcloth and sat in ashes. Again, these actions are characteristic of sorrow. The verse tells us this was true of every sinner in Nineveh, regardless of class or societal status; they *all* participated in grieving over their sins. The king himself even did this, and then he instituted a kingdom-wide decree of grieving their sin. Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 7:9-10, “I rejoice...because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief... For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.”

After commanding the kingdom-wide grieving over their sin, the Ninevite king commanded everyone in Jon. 3:8 to turn away from the evil they each do themselves. In other words, the king commanded all the Ninevites to recognize *their own contribution to the evil of their city* and to turn away from their own sins. This phrase ‘turn away’ means to repent. Though it is uncomfortable, grieving over our sins leads us to repentance. The Ninevites’ grief over their sins led them to repentance. Their repentance was not soiled by the ulterior motive of manipulating God; their repentance was rooted in the simple facts that (1) they sinned; (2) they were called out for their sin; (3) their sin would be imminently punished; and (4) they recognize that their punishment was deserved. The king of Nineveh says: *Who knows? Maybe God will not punish us as we deserve.* The king and his kingdom grieve and repent of their sins regardless of whether God will change his mind. A critical lesson from Jon. 3:9 is that a repentant heart is still willing to face the consequences for their actions because they recognize the consequences are deserved.

Jeremiah 18: Does Repentance Change God?

God responds to Nineveh’s repentance. Jon. 3:10 says: When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. The Ninevites were people of sin. God sent his prophet to call them out for their sin. God promised disaster for the Ninevites, a disaster that was deserved and warranted. Despite the reluctance of the messenger, the Ninevites believed the message that God would

overthrow them in forty days. Nevertheless, the Ninevites repented of their sins, and *in response to their repentance*, God did *not* do what he promised through Jonah.

Does God change his mind? The testimony of Scripture is a resounding ‘No.’⁴ So how do we explain what is happening in Jonah? God promised disaster and following the Ninevite repentance disaster did not come. How do we reconcile (a) the witness of Scripture that says God does not change his mind with (b) what appears to be God changing his mind in Jonah. The examples of Num. 23:19 and Ps. 110:4 speak to the unchangeability of God specifically pertaining to *anything he has promised*. We haven’t yet touched the passage we read at the start, but I hope as I’ve been building this tension that you’ve been remembering Jeremiah, for the clearest explanation in Scripture I’m aware of to answer this question of whether God changes is there.

Jeremiah 18 tells us about two nations: a nation upon which God has promised blessing and a nation upon which God has promised disaster. When a nation is promised blessing by God but then proceeds to ‘thank’ God for his imminent blessing by pursuing evil, God has promised to revoke his blessing. God’s initial promise of blessing was real and it was the means through which God revealed the false dependence upon God in their hearts. In this case the people who were promised blessing who then pursue evil reveal that they don’t want God; they just want the stuff God can give them. When a nation is promised disaster by God but then genuinely repents of their sin, God has *promised* to revoke his disaster. God’s initial promise of threat was real and it was the means through which God revealed the true dependence upon God in their hearts. In this case, the people who were promised disaster who then pursue repentance reveal that the stuff God gives is of secondary concern; more than his benefits, repentance reveals someone is chiefly satisfied in God. Whether it was the nation promised blessing who pursued evil or the nation promised disaster who pursued repentance, God’s real promise to both nations has a revelatory power; it revealed what was truly in their hearts, whether that was idolatry or devotion to YHWH.

How can we say that God’s relenting of overthrowing the Ninevites amounts to God changing when he has expressly revealed to us and promised us that this is precisely how he operates towards sinners? God’s real threat of disaster against the Ninevites revealed what was in

⁴ Here are five examples from Scripture. From the Torah we read: God is not like man that he should lie, or a son of man that he should change his mind. Will he not do what he has said? Or will he not fulfill what he has spoken? (Num. 23:19). From the prophets we read: For I, YHWH, do not change (Mal. 3:6). From the Writings we read: YHWH has sworn; he will not change his mind (Ps. 110:4). From the NT we read: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). We also read: Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change (Jas. 1:17).

their hearts: they recognized their own contribution to the evil around them and they acknowledged their need for God. The repentance of the Ninevites did not change who God is because this kind of ‘change’ in response to repentance is what God has promised to do with any nation. As Num. 23:19 rhetorically asked: Will he not do what he has said? Or will he not fulfill what he has spoken? What this means is that when God justly issues threats of punishment as a result of our sin, those threats are *conditional*.⁵ God issues real threats in response to the evil in this world to draw sinners to repentance so that he can show mercy, which he loves to do. God issues real threats of judgment and if we respond by disregarding the very real threat of eternal death, the punishment we face will be just because our denial does not negate the reality that we are nevertheless sinners. God issues real threats of judgment, but if we respond with genuine repentance, the relief we receive is nothing short of grace.

Does repentance change God? The answer to that question is no. Repentance does not change God, because God has determined and revealed to us that he works *through* our repentance. Please don’t hear me wrong. Repentance is not some formula to manipulate God so you can get out of the consequences for your sin. A truly repentant heart would not approach repentance in this way. Yet at the same time, God has explicitly promised us he will respond to our genuine repentance. A repentant heart will not use this truth to manipulate God; rather, a repentant heart will be comforted by and rest in God’s promise that we are not lost causes as a result of our sin; our repentance means something. At the start of Jer. 18, God is described as the potter and his people are the clay. God promises to do with his people what the potter does with the clay. The potter takes the clay and changes it into a vessel. If a vessel becomes broken, the potter changes it into something else; into something better. It is the clay that changes into something different. The potter does not change, the clay does. Repentance does not change God, but repentance *does change us* because repentance is the means *through which* God has promised to transform and shape us into the image and likeness of Christ. Our repentance means something because God works *through* our repentance to change *us* and *our* circumstances.

Excursus: Do Not Be Among the People of Verse 12

In his great prayer of repentance in Ps. 51, David tells us that *God will not despise* a grieving and repentant heart (v. 17). God desires to be merciful and gracious to us, so God promises

⁵ [Sam Storms: Oklahoma City, OK > Did God Change His Mind about Judging the Ninevites?](#)

us in Jer. 18 this glorious promise that all God wants from us is our repentance. But after Jeremiah tells us about the two nations who received a promise of blessing and disaster, God commands Jeremiah to prophesy against God’s people for their sin and to call every single one of God’s people to repent from their own evil ways. This is a simultaneously ominous *and* life-giving message from YHWH through Jeremiah. He tells God’s people that God has planned disaster against them because of their sin *immediately after* telling them that to avoid such real, deserved disaster requires only repentance. But there is a group of people in v. 12 who deny the transformative power of repentance. *Repentance is in vain*, they say. *Repentance does nothing*, they say. *I will do what I want*, they say. *Nobody can tell me what to do*, they say. *I’m just going to follow my heart*, they say. Church, do not be among the people of v. 12. Do not be among the people who think your repentance has no significance to God. Do not be among the people who deny what your sins deserve. Do not be among the people who fail to take God’s warnings to heart. Do not be among the people of v. 12.

Application: What and How?

It would be easy to scapegoat my former pastor and talk about what he *should* have done. But truth be told, what he *should* have done is what you and I should be doing ourselves with our own sins *on a regular basis*. We should be a people of repentance. Why? Because becoming a Christian doesn’t magically make you stop sinning—of course, over time a life of walking with the Spirit should result in sinning less often; and of course, John tells Christians not to make a habit of sinning. But this does not negate the fact that Christians still sin.

One of the changes that takes place when you put your faith in the death and resurrection of Christ is you receive a new heart from the Holy Spirit who lives within you. I define the new heart as a change in worldview. Part of what this means is that the person who has put their faith in Christ and received the grace of forgiveness deals with their own sins differently than the world does. The world goes out of their way to get away with their sins; to cover them up. The Christian, however, deals with their sins by confessing them. In 1 John 1:7-9, we receive this *promise*: If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us *from all sin*. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But *if we confess our sins*, God is *faithful and just to forgive* us our sins and to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness. God transforms us *through* our confession and repentance.

Confessing your sins doesn't save you in the sense that if you die and you forgot some sins then somehow you're now in eternal jeopardy—no! That would be a more Catholic-sounding, works-based plan of salvation. Merely confessing your sins does not forgive your sins in a legal sense, for that took place at the moment of your conversion. Confession, however, cleanses you in the sense that you are freed from the ongoing shame that presses against you for the sins you know you've committed. This may seem paradoxical. If I confess my sins, the confession will bring me shame. Yes, this is true in an immediate sense, but it is also the way God has designed us to be freed from that shame in the long-term, for keeping our sins internal exacerbates our shame for as long as we hold onto it. Confessing our sins release our sins from its hold on us.

I once heard a pastor say that the sins he has committed *since becoming a Christian* bring him the most grief. This really resonates with me. Part of being in a church means being enveloped into one another's lives. I've been part of my church for 32 years; I've been intertwined with sinners for 32 years. There have been people part of my church in the past and present who have hurt me in a variety of ways. There have also been people part of my church in the past and present who I have hurt in a variety of ways. This shouldn't be a surprise because we're all sinners and our lives are covenantally intertwined. So what do we do about this? We seek reconciliation!

Jesus and Paul both talk about this in the context of church discipline. If someone wrongs you, you are told to go to them privately and to reveal how they have hurt you. Then you are to give them a reasonable amount of time to repent. If repentance is not shown, then you are to elevate the matter by meeting with two or three others who can testify that what was done was wrong, needs repentance, and join the hurt individual in calling the perpetrating believer to repent. Then, again, you are to give them a reasonable amount of time to repent. If repentance is not shown, then church tradition teaches you are to elevate the matter to the elders of the church. Then, the elders should give them a reasonable amount of time to repent. Then, as Jesus and Paul teach, if repentance is still not shown, then you are to elevate the matter to the whole church, and if repentance does not follow that then you deal with excommunicating someone who is living in persistent, unrepentant sin. However, if at any point in that process repentance is demonstrated, then the process stops, *because reconciliation and restoration through repentance is always the goal of church discipline.*

These aren't merely abstract ideas. This story of sin, confession, submission to church discipline, repentance, and restoration is part of my own story in my own church in the aftermath

of a big sin from my early 20s. I’ve lived this. I can attest that it’s not a quick fix, but it does work. So how can we repent of our sins? I’ve broken down this process into four movements.⁶

Movement 1. Grief leads to confession—Theologian Louis Berkhof calls this the emotional element, “a change of feeling, manifesting itself in sorrow for sin committed against a holy God.”⁷ Paul teaches in 2 Corinthians that grief is the beginning of repentance. When we see our sins as they really are, we can do nothing but grieve over them. And when we grieve over our sins, this should lead us to confess those sins to God, calling those sins what they actually are; refusing to use pretty language. When the young adults I mentor confess to me that they are having sex with their girlfriend, they never use the word fornicate. That word is too ominous. I wonder, though, what life transformation would take place if we called our sins the words God calls them? Perhaps we would not view them as casually as so many of us do, and it would be easier to say no to them.

Movement 2. Confession leads to humbly requesting mercy—Confession, though, is not merely an information transfer. Throughout Church history, whether Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, or Evangelical, church services for nearly 2,000 years have included in the liturgy a section for the congregation to confess their sins *and* following the confession of sins, whether in chant or musical instrumentation, there would be a request for mercy made to God.⁸ It’s a Latin phrase called *Kyrie Eleison*, meaning “Lord have mercy.” In Pre- and Post-Reformation Rome, in Luther, and in Calvin-led worship services, confession of sin and the request for mercy were the first things to happen after the introductory call to worship. If we rightly understand that our sins are chiefly against God, then our confession should be paired with a request for mercy. Asking God for mercy is a declaration that you believe the message of God, that the sins you just confessed deserve his just punishment. Repentant confession recognizes the true nature of our sins.

Movement 3. Confession leads to assurance of forgiveness—Confessing our sins is scary; it brings us shame (at least initially); and it’s challenging because we aren’t readily taught how to do it. There’s a right way and a wrong way to confess our sins. Confessing our sins has a purpose; well, actually two purposes. Repentantly confessing our sins forces us to regularly recognize the penalty for our sins. But there is another purpose. In the grief we feel over our sins, in the

⁶ I am largely following the famous quote from Corrie Ten Boom: “Four marks of true repentance are: acknowledgment of wrong, willingness to confess it, willingness to abandon it, and willingness to make restitution.”

⁷ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 486.

⁸ Personal seminar notes and handout by Dr. Bryan Chapell, “Consistent Features of All ‘Christian’ Worship,” presented at the *Sing! 2022* conference in Nashville, TN.

confession of our sins to God, in the request for God’s mercy, it is so easy for us to feel utterly defeated; to feel worthless. This is why in the wake of all this, we need people around us to remind us that not only is there mercy for those whose hearts grieve over their sins, but there is also full forgiveness and grace.

This is why James tells us to confess our sins *to one another* and pray *for one another*, that you would be *healed*; that you would be *made right*. When we’re in a rut, when we’re feeling miserable, reminding ourselves of the goodness of God is not at the forefront of our minds. We *need* one another to remind us what we are unable to tell ourselves in the weakness of grieving our sins. Catholicism says you *must* confess your sins to a human person, specifically a priest, but this is not what James 5:16 says. Our sins are against God, so our confession is owed only to God. However, having an internal, prayerful monologue to God is harder to capture both the guilt and forgiveness that confession is intended to bring about, so James has helpfully instructed us to confess our sins to one another. Not to a priest! To one another; to any believer, *so that* the believer you confess to can assure you of your forgiveness; they can remind you of what was accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We need this assurance. If you confess your sins to someone and they don’t pray with you or at least for you; if they don’t assure you in your grief of the grace of forgiveness, I recommend finding someone else to confess to in the future who can pull you from the chaos waters and settle you onto dry land.

And a word for when you receive confession: You are not God, but in that moment, treat the person confessing to you as if you were. Before you stands a sinner confessing his or her sin to you and asking for mercy. As best as you can, let them hear and feel the grace of God’s forgiveness *through your words* and *through your body language*. If someone confesses their sins to you, you have a Christlike duty to your fellow believer to listen to their confession, to ask good clarifying questions to help guide them in genuine confession toward reconciliation, *and to remind them of the Gospel*; to remind them that they have been forgiven by their faith in Christ; to help them walk in freedom from their shame, grief, despair; and to pray for them. Unlike the teaching of Catholicism, we do not *need* to confess our sins to a person for it to “count.” Our sins are against God; our confession is owed to God, but James helpfully tells us we can confess to God *through* a fellow believer and that to do so is *good*. The right way to confess is to grieve your sins for what they are, and with the goal of walking away from the shame of your sins to instead walk in freedom. Confessing to God *through* a trusted fellow believer is a great tool and gift from God. Use it!

Movement 4. Assurance of forgiveness leads to resolving to change—Feeling bad about your sins, alone, does not transform your life. But when we see our sins as they really are, when we confess them, when we recognize our deserved punishment, when we ask for mercy, and when we receive the grace of mercy through the Gospel-saturated words of a fellow believer—this is what gives us the resolve to turn away from our sins and to turn instead toward God. With the idea of clothing, Paul tells us to take off the old self and put on Christ. The assurance of forgiveness is what empowers us. Feeling bad about our sin does not empower us to stop sinning. Being assured of the grace of the Gospel, though, does empower us to pursue the righteousness of Christ.

Some Pastoral Care to Conclude

In closing, I don't want you to hear this and think you are a failure because you haven't gotten to step four yet. These aren't intended to be steps that you have to get all the way through in order for it to “count.” That would be an exaggerated misuse of these four movements. The Christian life is marked by regular repentance. This means that for all of our sins that we're aware of we should be somewhere on this journey. If this is new to you, try not to get overwhelmed by every sin you've ever committed. Start with just one, the one at the forefront of your mind right now, so you can be freed from its enslaving shackles of shame.

If you're grieving your sins, please don't leave today thinking where you're at right now isn't enough. In Ps. 51, God promises us he will not despise a heart in grief over their sins (v. 17). Echoing this, in Matt. 5, the most famous sermon of Jesus begins with these words: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted (Matt. 5:3-4). These are sure promises of God. Your grief is seen, and known, and beloved by God who is ready to embrace you with warm, open arms. Ask him for mercy. Receive the relief of the assurance of forgiveness that enables you to start anew. Unlike the people of v. 12, deal with your sins by taking them seriously and remembering that they were crucified with Christ that you may be raised to live with Christ, made whole as a new creation in him.

Let's pray—Lord, we give you thanks that you do not expect us to be perfect; we thank you for the reliable promises of your Word. That you show mercy to any of us is an act of grace, for which you are owed nothing short than our never-ending praise. Help us to repent by bringing to our mind sinful attitudes, words, and behaviors we are unaware of, that we may bring them to the cross of your son Jesus, to be eternally freed from their power. In his name we pray, amen.